

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate therein the recitation of claims 3 and 7. Claim 1 has also been amended to employ the article "a" for introducing shore D hardness and shore A hardness. Claims 3 and 7 have been canceled.

In response to the objection, claim 8 has been amended so as to be in the form of a sentence. The recitation of claim 7 as incorporated into claim 1 was similarly modified. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 8, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 11-201288 (JP '288). Claims 1, 2 and 5-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,538,262 to Matsumura. Claims 6, 7, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over JP '288. Claims 1-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsumura in view of JP '288.

Applicants respond as follows.

Regarding the present invention:

The present invention relates to a sealing material comprising a coating film comprising a metal or a metallic compound on the whole or a part of the surface of a substrate comprising a fluorine polymer material. The fluorine polymer material and the coating film are closely adhered with each other at a degree of adhesivity where the critical breaking load is at least 25 m N, which is measured with the microscratch test at specific conditions.

The present invention provides a sealing material in which non-tacking property, chemical resistance and plasma resistance are enhanced while maintaining the strength, hardness and sealing property possessed by a fluorine polymer material.

Regarding novelty and non-obviousness over JP 11-201288 (JP '288):

JP '288 discloses a fluorocarbon rubber as an elastic body, but also discloses NBR, butyl rubber, chloroprene rubber and silicone rubber besides fluorocarbon rubber (referring to paragraph number [0006] in JP '288). Therefore, JP '288 does not define the fluorocarbon rubber. In addition, in JP '288, there is no working example of any sealing material where a substrate comprising a fluorocarbon rubber is used. Further, JP '288 does not disclose or teach that the fluorine polymer material and the coating film are closely adhered with each other at a degree of adhesivity where the critical breaking load is at least 25 m N by using the fluorocarbon rubber as the elastic body.

Consequently, JP '288 does not lead one of ordinary skill to choose a fluorine polymer material of the present invention from a large number of various kinds of elastic bodies, and does not teach the fluorine polymer according to the present invention.

Regarding novelty over US 5,538,262 (Matsumura):

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate therein the recitation of claim 3, to thereby obviate the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Matsumura.

Regarding non-obviousness over Matsumura in view of JP '288:

Matsumura discloses a core material selected from the group consisting of natural rubber, synthetic rubber and synthetic resin (referring to claim 2 of Matsumura), but does not disclose the fluorine polymer material.

In addition, in Matsumura, there is no working example of any sealing material where a substrate comprising a fluorocarbon rubber is used. Further, Matsumura does not disclose nor teach that the fluorine polymer material and the coating film are closely adhered with each other

at a degree of adhesivity where the critical breaking load is at least 25 m N by using the fluorocarbon rubber as the substrate.

As mentioned above, JP '288 discloses a fluorocarbon rubber as an elastic body, but also discloses elastic bodies besides the fluorocarbon rubber. Therefore, JP '288 does not disclose choosing a fluorine polymer material as defined in the present invention from large number of various kinds of elastic bodies, and does not teach the fluorine polymer material according to the present invention.

Consequently, the present invention is patentable over Matsumura in view of JP '288.

Withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of claims 1, 2, 4-6 and 8-13 is earnestly solicited.

In the event that the Examiner believes that it may be helpful to advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number indicated below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: June 5, 2008